



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PCAR and Former PA First Lady Michele M. Ridge Recognize April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month with Prevention Message

Enola, Pa. (April 5, 2007) —The month of April is known nationally as Sexual Assault Awareness Month, with April 5th designated as *A Day to End Sexual Violence*. In honor of this important month, the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR) is engaging community members in the prevention of sexual violence through a new statewide awareness campaign culminating on Saturday, April 28, 2007 with the *Vision of Hope Gala*.

With the theme “help grow the solution” PCAR’s latest campaign invites communities across the Commonwealth to take an active role in promoting healthy families and communities by “growing the solution” to end sexual violence. Using a daisy as the campaign logo, the idea is that power can be beautiful – in the form of a simple flower.

Pennsylvania’s 52 rape crisis centers, serving all of the Commonwealth’s 67 counties, will implement this campaign in their local communities by hosting awareness events, community presentations, airing radio PSAs and canvassing their local cities, towns and municipalities with posters and messaging about sexual violence prevention.

The highlight of this month’s campaign will take place on Saturday, April 28 when PCAR hosts the inaugural *Vision of Hope Gala* at the Hilton Harrisburg Hotel. This magical evening of dinner and dancing will bring together business leaders and community members to celebrate all children with the goal of securing support for future generations.

Sponsoring organizations including Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia; Highmark Blue Shield; Independence Blue Cross; NHS Human Services; S.W. Jack Drilling Co.; Blank Rome, LLC; GIANT Foods; The Hillman Foundation; M&T Bank; Penn State Hershey Children’s Hospital & Penn State Women’s Center; Buchanan, Ingersoll & Rooney, PC; The Hershey Company and Capital Blue Cross have pledged their support to “help grow the solution.”

The Honorary Gala Host Committee includes the distinguished group of Rev. Kenneth Arthur; U.S. Senator & Mrs. Robert Casey; Carmen and Tonia Finestra; State Senator Hal and Phyllis S. Mowery; Governor Edward G. Rendell; U.S. Senator & Mrs. Arlen Specter; and Leslie Stiles.

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“As the mother of two children and as former Pennsylvania First Lady, I know that sexual violence has a devastating impact on our families and communities,” said Michele M. Ridge, chair of the Vision of Hope. “But there is hope. With events like the Vision of Hope Gala, we are working toward preventing child sexual abuse and protecting children from a lifetime of devastation.”

An estimated 651,500 or our nation’s children will experience sexual abuse each year. These national numbers represent:

- 10 times the average SuperBowl attendance,
- 93,077 Minivans full of children,
- 26,061 classrooms of 1st graders,
- 40,721 soccer teams!

Law enforcement officials estimate that as many as 50,000 sexual predators are online at any given moment.

Proceeds from the gala will benefit the Vision of Hope Fund and will be used to create multi-level responses that promote effective prevention, critical intervention, and adult responsibility for the safety and well-being of our children.

“Every child deserves a life free from sexual abuse,” said Delilah Rumburg, executive director of PCAR. “With this gala, we hope to raise awareness – and funds – needed to protect the hopes and dreams of our children.”

Vision of Hope was launched in July 2005. Less than two years later, PCAR has assembled an esteemed advisory council of 30 government, business, and community leaders and launched an educational media campaign. To date, PCAR has raised almost \$110,000 for Vision of Hope, with a goal of reaching \$2 million by 2008.

For more information on how to make a difference in the life of a child through Vision of Hope or to make a donation, please visit www.theirhope.org.

For information on preventing sexual violence in your community, visit www.pcar.org/giveadaisy for a comprehensive community action list.

PCAR is an organization working at the state and national levels to prevent sexual violence. Since its inception in 1975, PCAR has been at the forefront of the anti-sexual violence movement challenging public attitudes, raising public awareness and effecting critical changes in public policy, protocols and responses to sexual violence.

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